



Cross Country Peace of Mind

by Mario Rossilli, VA Jackson

The cross-country ski trail is paved with tranquility and hope, with achievement and accomplishment.

A nearby creek gently flows, leaving a calming sound as if to sooth the spirit and body of the disabled veterans cross-country skiing at this year's Winter Sports Clinic.

The mountains, unblemished by progress, reach high into the air, touching the heavens and offering hope to the veterans who have come here to learn to live with their disabilities.

"It's very relaxing," says Michael White, 46, a visual impaired Coast Guard veteran. "It's like going fishing. You know when you go fishing, it's like you're in your own world."

Indeed, Debbie Greitzer, White's ski instructor, says many skiers prefer cross-country skiing because of the isolated experience in a secluded area with a spectacular nature setting.

"It takes a lot of your mind," says Robert Paredes, 66, a paraplegic Air Force veteran. "It's super to be out here in God's country. I wouldn't miss it."

It's unusual to find such a great canyon for cross-country skiing that remains largely unpopulated, says Robert Holt, 72, of Salt Lake City, Utah.

"People with disabilities need more than everyday life I think," says Holt, a visually impaired Air Force veteran. "It helps us to become more independent. It helps build my confidence. I can do things myself."

Still, veterans on the cross-country ski trails say don't let the serenity fool you.

Cross-country skiing is still very much a sport that requires stamina, provides physical challenges, and pays off with accomplishments.

"It's great scenery. It makes you feel better about working out because this is such a great area," says Brandon Taylor, 25, of the cross-country skiing course.

Taylor, a paralyzed Marine Corp veteran, cross-country skied for the first time this week. "It took me a while, but I made it there and back. It was a good workout. I enjoyed myself."



RACE DAY SCHEDULE

6:30-8:30am BREAKFAST: Conference Center

8:00-1:30pm Downhill Ski Races
Spider Sabach Race Center
(see below for team start times)

8:30am Cross Country Ski Race
Ashcroft Ski Touring Center

11:30-3:30pm Taste of Snowmass
Snowmass Village Mall

1:30-4:30pm Medal Presentations
Snowmass Village Mall

7:00pm Closing Ceremonies
Conference Center Ballroom

9:00pm Victory Celebration
Conference Center Ballroom

**Web sites for the
Winter Sports Clinic:**

www.va.gov/vetski

or

**[www.va.gov/vetevent/
wsc/2002/](http://www.va.gov/vetevent/wsc/2002/)**

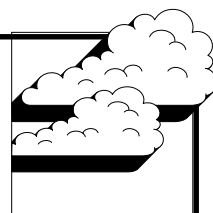
Transportation to Airport Info!!

On Saturday and Sunday, there will be buses in front of the Silver Tree Hotel to take you to the airport, beginning at 5:00 a.m. The hotel will take your luggage separately, so you need to have your luggage outside your door 3 hours before you leave. Make sure your luggage is tagged or the hotel will not take it. Remember that you need to be at the airport at least two hours prior to your departure. The last bus to the airport will leave at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday.

Race Day Start Schedule

<u>Teams</u>	<u>Regular Start Time</u>	<u>Race Day Start Time</u>
Gray Wolf	Monday, 8:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.
Naked Lady	Monday, 8:00 a.m.	
Sunnyside	Monday, 8:00 a.m.	
Bonzai	Monday, 12:30 p.m.	9:30 a.m.
Free Fall	Monday, 12:30 p.m.	
Sheer Bliss	Monday, 12:30 p.m.	
Granite	Tuesday, 8:00 a.m.	10:45 a.m.
Rock Island	Tuesday, 8:00 a.m.	
Sneaky's	Tuesday, 8:00 a.m.	
Moonshine	Tuesday, 12:30 p.m.	12:00 noon
Slider	Tuesday, 12:30 p.m.	
Wildcat	Tuesday, 12:30 p.m.	

**WEATHER
CORNER**



Cloudy

UV Index 7 - High

**30% Chance of
Precipitation**

**Today's High: 58
Tonight's Low: 31**

More Yard Sales

- * **Dick Irvine**, Instructor, Dislocated Shoulder
- * **Sara Whittle**, Instructor, LCL sprain
- * **William Gould**, #199, Jackson, MS, LAC,
Facial abrasions,

Medical Assistance

Call 911 for emergencies

7:30 am-9:30 pm:
cell 291-9501 or
923-2000 ext. 380

After hours:

First, 291-9501
If no answer,
call 923-3900

Gossip Goodies

Tattle-Trails

by Spilzie Beans



Hey B. O'C, Spilzie hears you're blowing circuits and killing hair dryers left and right! Watch out and don't break a leg while you're roaming around in the dark! And for Pete's sake do something with that hair. You know, there are a couple of salons around that can help you!

And speaking of food staff (or were we?), a certain visually impaired veteran being led by staff was heard to remark that, let's call her "Pat" (not her real name of course), hadn't missed too many meals. Now I'm sure Spilzie would never say something like that! Can you see me now??

And what's that rumor going around about a certain volunteer who had a very interesting conversation with one of the celebrities – in the Men's Room for gosh sakes. What **can** you talk about when your hands are full?

The spotlight is on you, D.V. A.H. reports that medical treatment was necessary for the unfortunate participant who got in the way of your freelance job at the concert Wednesday night. Keep that day job, D! You're killing us!!!

Just how many uses are there for those nifty shoe shiners that were part of your packets? According to R. M. here is the top ten list:

- Number 10 shoe polish applicator
- Number 9 sponge paint applicator
- Number 8 significant other's make-up applicator
- Number 7 staining furniture
- Number 6 moistener for envelopes
- Number 5 moistener for stamps
- Number 4 Use as container for lures
- Number 3 Coin purse
- Number 2 container for sinkers

And Number 1 *drum roll* Ladies, for the big boy in your life, an inconspicuous condom concealer OR "are you sponge worthy?"

That's all for Spilzie for today. I'm sure for some of you, that's enough! Keep smiling and keep sending those chatty items my way!

Lost and Found

Claim items in Host Room:

1 yellow ski jacket
2 black backpacks
2 prs black gloves
1 blue & red knit ski hat
1 tan & green WSC hat
1 blue head band
1 pr elk leather gloves
1 gray glove
1 tan glove
bib 237
credential for S. Palm
1 pin Steamboat Challenge
1 novel by Conroy
1 watch
1 earring

Don't Forget to Vote!!!

At the Closing Ceremonies, six individuals will be recognized for unique contributions to the Clinic.

How are they selected? YOU choose them! Stop by now in the lobby of the Conference Center and the Host Room to vote for your candidates to receive the following awards:

- * Team Leader Award
- * Downhill Ski Instructor Award
- * Cross Country Ski Instructor Award
- * Judy Shawo Commitment to Excellence Award
- * Sid Ford Award for Service Above and Beyond the Call of Duty
- * Linnie Howard Spirit Award

Voting ends at NOON on to

day, so be sure to cast your vote for your favorites now!

Till We Meet Again...

Our sincere thanks to all of the participants who so willingly shared their stories with us this week at the 16th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. We have all been busy preparing news releases for you, writing up articles for the daily *SkiGram*, working with the news media to let people know about this wonderful event, getting photographs of our inspiring participants as you skied, and posting lots of information on the Clinic web site. (Watch for upcoming stories on *Entertainment Tonight* and *Country Music Television*.)

When you get home, please check out the web site at www.va.gov/vetski — and tell your friends and family to take a look as well. If you wanted a news release and we got a photo of you skiing, it will be there under your name, in “Participant Information.”

Many thanks to all of the team leaders, instructors, and other staff and volunteers who helped us throughout the week – telling us about interesting stories and photo opportunities, tracking down interviews, and helping us get quotes and missing information. Your help was invaluable.

As always, we go home inspired by all we have seen this week, and we thank you for reminding us not to be limited by the challenges we face, but to let those *Miracles on a Mountainside* keep happening each and every day. We look forward to seeing you back in Snowmass Village next year!

The 2002 Winter Sports Clinic Public Relations Team

Diane Hartmann
Ivonne McDowell
Annie Tuttle
Pete Porter
Toby Norris
John Markowski

Bob Klear
Kim Byers
Tammy Thomas
Elaine Buehler
Susan Fleece
John Patrick

Jenny Tankersley
Duane Honeycutt
Mario Rossilli
Tom Barrett
Bill Brough
Beth Barrett

Robert Turtill
Alan Arellano
Judy Peckham
Gene Davies
Steve Wiggins
and Spilzie Beans

Self-defense for the Disabled

Once again this year, the United States Secret Service provided a valuable service to the Clinic in the form of self-defense training for those in wheelchairs and for the visually impaired. Mark Camillo, Deputy Special Agent in Charge, Presidential Protective Division, The White House, and Paul Smagh, Special Agent, conducted the training for this year's Clinic participants. Camillo, who began this program for the Clinic, offered the following thoughts on the origin and intent of the training:

The United States Secret Service has the enormous responsibility of protecting the President of the United States as well as many other high-ranking dignitaries. Their personnel are constantly put into dangerous situations, so learning how to survive a confrontation is a key to Secret Service training.

Because they know that the disabled are more vulnerable to confrontation than the able-bodied, VA approached the Secret Service and asked for their help in developing a clinic on self-defense for veterans attending the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic.

Agent Mark Camillo, who was training agents in self-defense tactics at the Service's training facility in Largo, Md., took a look at the program they used to train the agents and adapted it for both the physically and visually impaired. The first year of the training program turned out to be a resounding success with the veterans, and Camillo has now produced the program for the past six years. "It was our hope that what we do to prepare our own personnel for survival is helpful to these men and women who have served our nation," said Camillo.

The program first teaches the veterans to recognize dangerous situations and methods of minimizing the risk and avoiding confrontation. "We talk about the importance of planning an escape route and, above all, keeping your cool," Camillo explains. "But if they can't avoid it and do face a confrontation, we show them a few things that, hopefully, will help them survive."

Camillo tells them that they should use everything they have to survive, including their blind stick or the arm of their wheelchair. To those in wheelchairs, he says that getting their attacker to the ground, or on their own level, will be effective because of their superior upper body strength. Camillo gets into a wheelchair to demonstrate certain moves, and gets down on the floor with them to help them learn.

"One class is certainly not enough to keep them safe," said Camillo. "But I hope what they learn here will help them survive if they are attacked. If nothing else, I hope it gives them the incentive to find a self-defense program and learn more."

The Secret Service's involvement with the Clinic is more than just another training session. "Ever since the first time I came to the Clinic, I've been in awe of these courageous men and women," Camillo says. "They astound me out on the slopes. I consider it a privilege to be allowed to come here and do what I can to make their lives safer."

Final Thoughts ...

"There is always a feeling of great expectation initially, then an even greater feeling of pride and accomplishment afterward," said Sabraw. "Each time, my faith in what I can do is renewed and it spills over to other aspects of my life." **Elaine Sabraw, Ogden, UT**

"The Clinic has opened up many opportunities for me to re-engage in sports," said Lee. "I never thought I would ski again after a near fatal accident in 1990. This Winter Sports Clinic has taught me otherwise — it is great rehabilitation as it gets me back to the great outdoors."
Danny Lee, Scotia, NY

"The last four years at the Winter Sports Clinic have been terrific," said Malcomb. "The coaches that I've had have been excellent in downhill and cross-country skiing. The Clinic is the best morale builder for the disabled — it is better than all the counseling I have had. I look forward to the Clinic every year." **William Malcomb, Great Falls, WA**

"I had never skied before my accident," said Fulton. "Learning to ski has opened up a whole new world for me — it has changed my life. The inspiration I receive from watching other veterans more disabled than me is phenomenal. I look forward to this event every year."
James Fulton, Huntington Station, NY

"Snow skiing is a great opportunity to have fun and build confidence," said Koester. "Once you've conquered that mountain, coming down full speed with the wind in your hair, you know that you can do anything in life you set your mind to. Many thanks to all of my instructors."
Holly Koester, Walton Hills, OH

"No matter what age you are or whether you are disabled or not, you have to be ready for a new challenge," said Milliken. "We all learn so much from each other at the Clinic — how we struggle through life and tackle these challenges. If I can do this, I can do anything — and that's what it's all about." **James Milliken, South Bend, IN**

"Skiing has enhanced my life to an unbelievable high," said Harding. "In 1999, I first attended the Winter Sports Clinic even though I had never skied before. I lost both of my legs in a severe snow-storm in 1978 and thought I would never go out in the snow again. After conquering that fear, I have taken ski lessons every year since and I now ski a lot. Skiing helps keep my body in good physical shape. For those veterans who have never attended the Clinic, it's like being a diamond in the rough — you will come home with a whole new outlook on life." **Ronald Harding, Riverside, CA**

"I'm hooked," said Rutherford. After 16 years of being in his wheelchair, Rutherford played hockey and skied for the first time at the Clinic. He said, "To play hockey — I didn't think that this would ever be possible, and skiing was awesome. My instructors were great — the last run of the day we took the outriggers off my skis, so I was actually bi-skiing. A miracle on the mountainside truly happened here today." **James Rutherford, Ypsilanti, MI**

"To ski is like touching the stars," said Williams. "It takes your spirit out beyond any place you've ever dreamed of. Skiing is such a wonderful way to rehabilitate people who have incurred a traumatic injury, or have a major case of low self-esteem. I wish everyone could get involved."
Lee Williams, Antioch, CA